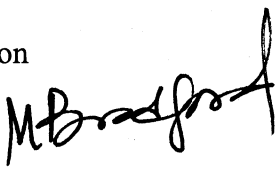




MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB Date: 01/22/2008
Agenda Item #6

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 15, 2009
TO: Montgomery County Park Commission
FROM: Mary R. Bradford, Director of Parks 
SUBJECT: Office of Legislative Oversight Report 2009-7, Organization of Recreation Programs across the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Transmit the Board's support for the "Option A2" recommendation of the Office of Legislative Oversight Report 2009-7, Organization of Recreation Programs across the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation; that is the consolidation of all recreation programs under management of the Montgomery County Department of Parks.

BACKGROUND:

The attached Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) report studies current methods and proposed options for the provision of recreation programs to the residents of Montgomery County. One of the OLO recommendations is to consolidate recreation programs in one Department, either within the Department of Recreation (Option A1) or within the Department of Parks (Option A2).

A memorandum from the Director of Parks on pages 85-91 of the report expresses Department of Parks support of Option A2 as the preferred alternative; consolidation within the Department of Parks. The benefits of consolidating recreation programs within the Department of Parks (which would likely become the Department of Parks and Recreation under this scenario) include:

- Strengthening the critical link between recreational facility planning, development, maintenance, and policing with provision of recreational programs;
- Improving the linked balance between passive, unprogrammed recreation such as enjoyment of natural areas with the provision of active programmed recreation;
- Having the large agency assume the small agency, as opposed to vice versa;
- Mirroring the highly successful model of the Prince George's Department of Parks and Recreation within the M-NCPPC;

- Expanding the high quality recreational programs already delivered by the Department of Parks;
- Expanding the synergistic link between land use planning and parks to the greater provision of recreation programs;
- Creating greater opportunities for funding and operating recreation facilities and programming; and
- Continuing direct control of parks and recreation programs under the leadership of the County Council.

A memorandum from Timothy Firestine, the County's Chief Administrative Officer, on pages 82-84 of the report indicates support of Option A1; consolidation within the Department of Recreation. It advocates that:

- all recreation programs be consolidated in one Department;
- the County explore and resolve all issues involved in consolidating programs in a single Department;
- the effort include a community inventory of Recreation and Leisure Services; and
- there are several benefits of consolidation under the Executive Branch, while refuting several stated benefits of consolidation within the M-NCPPC.

CONCLUSION:

Staff's recommendation is to transmit the Board's support for the "Option A2" in a separate memorandum, under the signature of the Chairman, to the County Council supporting the consolidation of all recreation programs and facilities within overall management of the Montgomery County Department of Parks. The Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee is scheduled to hold a worksession on the OLO report on February 9, 2009.

MRB:MFR